

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY PANAMA

S E C R E T USUN 1828

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON NEW PANAMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

1. OUR EXPERIENCE WITH AQUILINO BOYD AT THE UNITED NATIONS OVER THE YEARS LEADS US TO A PESSIMISTIC ASSESSMENT OF HIS PROBABLE IMPACT ON U.S./PANAMA RELATIONS AS PANAMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER. BOTH HIS TRACK RECORD AND HIS UNSTABLE PERSONALITY SUPPORT THIS CONCLUSION.

2. AS A VERY AMBITIOUS MEMBER OF PANAMA'S UPPER CLASS, EDUCATED IN THE U.S., BOYD MUST CONSTANTLY POLISH HIS ULTRANATIONALISM TO MAINTAIN HIS CREDENTIALS WITH THE TORRIJOS REGIME. THIS IMPELS HIM TO ASSUME RADICAL POSTURES AND TO TAKE ON THE U.S. VERBALLY WHENEVER AN OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF. HIS FREQUENT INFLAMMATORY STATEMENTS ON THE CANAL ZONE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL IN THE CONTEXT OF UNREALATED DISCUSSIONS ARE EXAMPLES. WHETHER THE SUBJECT IS TIMOR, LOYADA OR THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, BOYD BRINGS IN THE PANAMA CANAL AND THE GREAT INJUSTICES PERPETRATED ON HIS INNOCENT COUNTRY. IN ADDITION BOYD TENDS TO LOSE EMOTIONAL CONTROL IF HE IS BACKED INTO A CORNER. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, AMBASSADOR BOYD IN CONVERSATIONS WITH U.S. REPRESENTATIVES HERE HAS QUITE

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LITERALLY BECOME HYSTERICAL. HE SEEMS TO PROCEED ON THE THEORY

THAT, IF PANAMA GOES ON KICKING THE UNITED STATES IN THE GROIN LONG ENOUGH, WE WILL BE GRATEFUL TO THE PANAMANIAN WHEN THEY FINALLY STOP.

3. BOYD AND HIS WIFE ARE SOCIALLY ATTRACTIVE, AND HE CAN BE CHARMING, WELL MANNERED AND ENTIRELY PLAUSIBLE WHEN NOT UNDER PRESSURE. HIS WIFE IS A HANDSOME WOMAN OF DIGNITY AND PRESENCE. WE HAVE FOUND IT BEST TO ATTEMPT TO DO BUSINESS WITH BOYD ON AS RELAXED A BASIS AS POSSIBLE. UNFORTUNATELY, HE HAS ON OCCASION PARTED FROM US AMICABLY, ONLY TO ROUSE HIMSELF LATER TO AN EMOTIONAL STATE IN WHICH HE ALTERS HIS RECOLLECTION OF THE EARLIER CONSULTATION.

4. IT IS TO BE RECALLED THAT IT WAS BOYD WHO ENGINEERED THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL IN PANAMA IN 1973. ON THAT OCCASION, THERE WAS LITTLE GROUND FOR CHOICE AS TO REASONABLENESS BETWEEN BOYD AND TACK. WE ARE CONCERNED LEST BOYD AGAIN ARRANGE A SECURITY COUNCIL EXERCISE THAT WILL FURTHER DIM PROSPECTS FOR ACHIEVING A NEW PANAMA CANAL TREATY. PANAMA IS SCHEDULED TO HOLD THE PRESIDENCY OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL IN NOVEMBER OF THIS YEAR. A SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON PANAMA AT THE HEIGHT OF THE THIRTY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION WOULD NOT BE AN ATTRACTIVE PROSPECT, WHETHER HELD HERE OR ON THE ISTHMUS.

5. WE CAN EXPECT BOYD TO STEER A PANAMANIAN COURSE IN THE UNITED NATIONS DIRECTED AT GAINING MAXIMUM SUPPORT FOR PANAMA ON THE CANAL ISSUE. THIS MAY INCLUDE AT TIMES SUPPORT FOR POSITIONS OF MODERATES, AS PANAMA CAN COUNT ON EXTREMIST SUPPORT ON THE CANAL ISSUE IN ANY EVENT. AN EXAMPLE OF THIS SEEMED EVIDENT DURING THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ON TIMOR WHICH ENDED ON APRIL 22. BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE PANAMA ATTACHES TO HER RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA, AND WITH JAPAN, PANAMA SUPPORTED AN UNSUCCESSFUL AMENDMENT BY THE LATTER WHICH WOULD HAVE MODERATED A RESOLUTION CO-SPONSORED BY GUYANA AND TANZANIA (USUN 1712 NOTAL). AFTER THE RESOLUTION AS A WHOLE HAD THEN BEEN ADOPTED, PANAMA SOUGHT TO REPAIR FENCES WITH THE RADICALS BY VOICING A DESIRE TO BECOME A CO-SPONSOR OF THE RESOLUTION (IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE UNDER THE RULES).

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6. IN SUM, BOYD IS A MAN OBSESSED WITH THE CANAL ISSUE AND IMPELLED FOR PERSONAL REASONS TO MAKE THINGS NASTY FOR THE UNITED STATES IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS IN THE SEEMING CONVICTION THAT WE WILL EVENTUALLY BE EMBARRASSED INTO MAKING THE KIND OF CONCESSIONS DEMANDED BY PANAMA IN THE CANAL NEGOTIATIONS. WE HAVE ARGUED LONG AND EARNESTLY, BUT TO NO AVAIL, WITH BOYD THAT THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IS

ALREADY CONVINCED OF THE NEED FOR CHANGES IN OUR RELATIONS WITH PANAMA AND THE TASK NOW IS TO BRING THE UNITED STATES SENATE ALONG TO THAT CONVICTION THROUGH QUIET, PATIENT, BILATERAL EFFORTS. WE HAVE POINTED OUT REPEATEDLY THAT ONE OF THE QUICKEST WAYS TO TURN SENATORIAL AND OTHER U.S. OPINION AGAINST A MODERN TREATY, IS FOR PANAMA TO FOLLOW A COURSE OF TRYING TO PUT THE UNITED STATES IN THE DOCK AT THE UNITED NATIONS AND IN OTHER MULTILATERAL FORUMS AND TO HAVE PANAMA'S CAUSE INTERNATIONALIZED BY SUCH STATES AS CUBA, ALGERIA AND YUGOSLAVIA. WE HAVE SOUGHT TO PERSUADE BOYD THAT THIS COURSE WILL DENY HIM THE VERY THING HE IS SEEKING AND MAKE IT HARDER RATHER THAN EASIER FOR THE UNITED STATES AND PANAMA TO AGREE ON RATIONAL SOLUTIONS TO OUR CURRENT PROBLEMS. WE HAVE NEVER FELT WE HAD ANY SUCCESS WITH BOYD IN NEW YORK.

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